May 14, 2010

By Kelsey Volkmann, St. Louis Business Journal

Courtesy U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan's office From left, U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan, Gilles Cottier of Sigma-Aldrich, and Dr. Klaus Scharioth, German ambassador to the U.S., discuss trade between Missouri and Germany.

St. Louis business leaders and German lawmakers planned to meet Friday to see how companies can expand their business opportunities through trade between Missouri and Germany.

The workshop, convened by U.S. Rep. Russ Carnahan, D-Mo., will be held at Sigma-Aldrich Corp., a St. Louis life science company.

The forum will feature presentations by:

- Gilles Cottier, president of SAFC, the fine chemicals custom manufacturing and services business division of Sigma-Aldrich
- Tom Drazen, president and general manager of Schattdecor, a German printer of saturating grade papers for the laminate industry that is building a \$22 million plant in Maryland Heights, creating 107 permanent manufacturing jobs for the region.
  - Dr. Klaus Scharioth, German ambassador to the United States
- Fred Irwin, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany, which helps U.S. companies tap into business opportunities in Germany

Germany is the United States' fifth-largest trading partner, and in 2008 Germany ranked 6th among countries purchasing goods from Missouri. Germany is a leading consumer of Missouri's chemicals, machinery, transportation equipment, electrical equipment and computer/electronic products. German-owned affiliates provide 16,100 jobs and 10,200 manufacturing jobs in Missouri.

Friday afternoon's event is part of a two-day visit to the St. Louis region by members of the German Bundestag, or Parliament, the German ambassador to the United States and other officials that was organized by the Congressional Study Group on Germany, which Carnahan chairs. The Study Group is a project of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress, a non-profit dedicated to promoting public service and strengthening representative

democracy domestically and abroad.

A delegation from St. Louis' sister city in Germany, Stuttgart, came to town for four days last month to sign a climate change agreement.